

## INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH HISTORY

### I. DEFINITION OF. (WHAT IS THE STUDY OF CHURCH HISTORY?)

A. CHURCH- "EKKLESIA"- THOSE CALLED TOGETHER, THOSE CALLED OUT, OR SIMPLY ASSEMBLY. II COR. 6: 17

1. "I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH..."-MT.16:18.

NOTE: PETER IS NOT THE ROCK, (JESUS IS THE ROCK) PETER WAS CEPHAS- A SMALL STONE.

2. "THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH...".....ACTS 2:47.

3. JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH. EPH. 1 :22-23:

5:23.

B. HISTORY- LATIN "HISTORIA" (ALSO GK.) A LEARNING BY INQUIRY, KNOWLEDGE, A NARRATIVE, FROM "HISTOR" L. - KNOWING, LEARNED, A WISE MAN, FROM THE ROOT OF "EIDENAI"- TO KNOW.

"THAT BRANCH OF KNOWLEDGE WHICH DEALS WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE WORLD'S EXISTENCE; THE STUDY OR INVESTIGATION OF THE PAST" - WEBSTER.

HIS STORY- THE BIRTH, LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS THE CENTRAL EVENT OF THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

C. CHRISTIAN (WE ARE STUDYING THE STORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.)

1. COINED IN ANTIOCH (SYRIA) AROUND AD 40.

2. CHRISTLIKE OR ONE WHO FOLLOWS CHRIST.

### II. WHY STUDY CHURCH HISTORY?

A. AN APPRECIATION OF OUR HERITAGE.

1. MARTYRS OF THE GOSPEL. MANY HAVE PAID THE PRICE OF THEIR LIVES TO CARRY THIS GOSPEL MESSAGE.

2. WE MUST CARRY THE TORCH.

B. THE REPEAT OF HISTORY

HISTORY COMES IN CYCLES. BY STUDYING THE PAST WE CAN LEARN ABOUT THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE.

C. TO GUARD AGAINST ERROR.

1. ONE CAN TRACE THE ORIGIN OF ERRONEOUS FALSE) TEACHING.

2. WE CAN LEARN FROM OTHERS MISTAKES.

D. GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS. ROM. 2:11  
WHAT GOD REQUIRED OF MEN YESTERDAY- HE WILL  
STILL REQUIRE TODAY.

E. TO BUILD UP OUR FAITH.

1. SEE HOW GOD USES ORDINARY PEOPLE.
2. LEARN OF THE MIGHTY REVIVALS OF THE CHURCH. 3. KNOW
3. KNOW GOD'S HAND IS UPON HIS CHURCH.

F. TO ENRICH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MINISTER.  
GOD IS IN CONTROL OF HIS STORY. NOTHING HAPPENS  
UNLESS GOD WILLS IT. THOSE THAT FIGHT AGAINST GOD'S WILL  
CAN NOT WIN. NO DEVIL IN HELL WILL STOP THE WILL  
AND PLAN OF GOD. DAN. 2:20-22 MEMORIZE V. 21.

# **Church History**

## **The Church Covers Seven Ages**

### **1. The Apostolic Church -**

From the Day of Pentecost 30 AD. To the Completion of  
the N. T. about 100 AD.

### **II. The Persecuted Church -**

From the completion of the N. T. about 100 AD. To the Edict of Constantine 313 AD.

### **III. The Imperial Church**

From the Edict of Constantine 313 AD. To the Fall of Rome 476 AD.

### **IV. The Medieval Church -**

From the Fall of Rome 476 AD. To the Fall of Constantinople 1453 AD.

### **V. The Reformed Church -**

From the Fall of Constantinople 1453 AD. To the end of the Thirty Year War 1678 AD.

### **VI. The Modern Church -**

From the end of the Thirty Year War 1678 AD. To the Twentieth Century 1950 AD.

### **VII. The Laodicean Church -**

From the Twentieth Century 1950's AD. To the Time We Are Now In.

## **Church History**

### **Seven General Periods of Church History**

#### **1. The Apostolic Church - 30 -100 AD.**

From the day of Pentecost - To the Completion of the New Testament.

### **1. Definition of the Church-**

The Church consists of all believers who have been filled with the Holy Spirit with the sign evidence of speaking in tongues. I Cor. 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The Church is called the body of Christ. Eph. 1:22-23 "Gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body."

### **2. The Church's Beginning-**

The Church began on the Day of Pentecost fifty days after the Resurrection and ten days after His Ascension. Acts 2:1-4.

### **3. The Church's Enduement-**

Acts 1:8; They "received power, after that the Holy Ghost," came upon them. The effects of this experience was three-fold:

- (1). Illuminating -The Holy Spirit illuminated their minds to understand what they were not able to understand before. John 12:16; 1 Cor. 2:14.
- (2). Empowering - The Holy Spirit empowered them to preach and to work miracles. Acts 4:22; Acts 6:15.
- (3). Abiding - The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost and will abide until the Church is Raptured. As long as the Church is here the Holy Spirit will be here in the manner in which He came on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:39.

#### **4. The Church's Original Location-**

The Church began in the city of Jerusalem and was limited to the city and its immediate surroundings during the earliest years of its history until persecution scattered them abroad. Acts 8: 1.

#### **5. The Church's Membership-**

All members of the Pentecostal Church were Jews; none of the members at first dreamed that Gentiles would ever be a part of its membership. Acts 11: 1- 18.

#### **6. The Church's Government-**

The twelve Apostles as a body, made up the church's government, with Peter as their spokesman. Acts 2:14; 38-42. Later on James is the presiding elder. Acts 12:17; Acts 15:6-13; 21:18.

#### **7. The Church's Doctrines-**

(1) Jesus was the Messiah - Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the Christ, God incarnated. Acts 2:36.

(2) The Resurrection of Christ - They preached that Christ was crucified and that He rose from the dead, never to die again. Acts 2:30 - 32.

(3) The Return of Christ - He that ascended into heaven was going to return in like manner. Acts 2:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:15-17.

#### **8. The Church's Defect**

The Church was strong in faith and testimony, pure in character, and abundant in love. The one defect was the Church lacked a missionary vision. It took persecution to send them forth. Acts 8: 1.

## 9. The Church's Expanding

From the preaching of Stephen, 35 AD to the council of Jerusalem 48 AD.

There were Stages of Expansion

(1). Stephen's preaching -

a. Stephen was one of the seven chosen to take care of the secular needs of the Church, but was soon recognized as a man of great power. Acts 6:8.

b. Stephen's preaching led to the growth of the Church in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas.

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II. WHY STUectly or indirectly. Acts 19: 10.

b. The Churches were established through much suffering. 11 Cor. 11:23-28.

While a prisoner at Rome he did his greatest work, from his prison he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

c. The Apostle Paul was beheaded in the year 68 AD.

## II. THE PERSECUTED CHURCH - 100 AD. - 313AD.

From the completion of the New Testament - To the  
Edict of  
Constantine.

This sets forth the period when the church was  
crushed beneath the  
iron heel of pagan Rome, yet it never gave out such  
sweet fragrance  
to God as in those two centuries of almost constant  
martyrdom.

1. Smyrna - "crushed" - It comes from the root word  
*myrrh*, the  
myrrh plant had to be crushed in order to emit its  
sweet  
fragrance. Rev. 2:8-11.

2. Causes of Imperial persecutions.

(1) Heathen worship hospitable; Christianity  
exclusive.

(New gods were accepted by the heathens  
while Christians could not condone  
worship of false gods.)

(2) Idol worship interwoven with life.

a. Images stood in many houses to receive  
adoration.

b. Sacrifices were made to gods at  
festivals.

- ceremonies.
- c. Images were worshipped at civil
- idolatry were
- d. Christians who took no part in such  
not fitting in with the pagan society.

(3) Emperor worship.

- emperor.
- a. Christians would not worship the
- b. Christians spoke of another King.
- c. Christians were looked upon as being  
disloyal and  
plotters of a revolution.

(4) Judaism recognized.

- considered
- a. In the first century Christians had been  
a sect of Judaism, an allowed religion.
- b. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70  
AD.  
Christianity stood alone with no laws to  
protect  
them.

(5) Secret meetings.

- aroused
- a. The secret meetings of Christians  
suspicion. (They started to meet in  
secret to  
protect themselves from persecution.)

(6) Equality in the church.  
equal, thus  
nobles.  
a. Christians looked upon all men as  
destroying the social order of the

(7) Business interests.  
profitable  
persecution of  
a. Christianity meant an end to the  
business of making idols.  
b. The craftsmen supported the  
the Christians. Acts 19: 24-28.

3. The stages of persecution.  
Christianity was outlawed during all of the second  
and third  
centuries. There was tremendous persecution in  
the opening  
years of the fourth century, to the year 313 AD.  
( The Edict of  
Constantine.)

(1) The church experienced ten periods of  
intense  
persecution at the hands of Roman  
emperors.  
("Ye shall have tribulation ten days:" - Rev.  
2:10)

(2) In 303 AD. the Emperor Diocletian began the  
tenth  
and fiercest persecution of Christians that is  
called  
"The Great Persecution."

the face of  
erected a  
extirpation of  
  
the arena.  
and would  
  
helpless,  
swords away.

- a. An attempt to remove Christianity from the earth. (It is said that Diocletian pillar inscribed, "In honour of the the Christian superstition.")
- b. Many Christians were burned alive.
- c. Christians were eaten by wild beasts in (The beasts became sick of human flesh no longer attack.)
- d. Soldiers became weary of killing unarmed people and threw their

#### 4. Leaders of the persecuted church.

been a  
preacher of

- (1) Ignatius - Bishop of Antioch in Syria. He had pupil of the Apostle John. A powerful the Gospel.
- (2) Justin Martyr - He had been a philosopher, and continued teaching after his conversion. He wrote several books which are still in existence that give us much information about this period. One of his prominent works is

Judiazers. Dialogue With Trypho, a treatise refuting the  
(Rev. 2:9)

He was (3) Polycarp - Bishop of Smyrna at Asia Minor.  
mighty taught as a youth by the Apostle John. A  
messenger to his generation.

bishop of (4) Ireneus - A student of Polycarp. He became  
his Lyons (In Gaul) in 177 AD. He stressed the  
fundamental Christian doctrines which were  
facing opposition from the gnostics. Some of

## 5. Prominent Martyrs.

Jerusalem 1) Simeon - Successor of James as head of the  
church. He was crucified by order of the  
Roman governor of Palestine in 107 AD.  
during the reign of Trajan.

in the (2) Ignatius - He was thrown to the wild beasts  
Coliseum. Standing in the arena as the lions  
approached him, Ignatius prayed:  
*"I thank Thee O Lord, that Thou hast  
vouchsafed thus  
to honour me. I am God's grain, to be  
Ground between  
the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may  
become a holy  
loaf for the Lord."*

(3) Polycarp - When the Roman governor called upon him to deny Christ and threatened to burn him alive, Polycarp answered:  
*"Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and He has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me? You threaten the fire that burns for an hour and then is quenched; but you know not of the fire of the judgement to come, and not of the fire of the eternal punishment. Bring what you will."*  
He was then burned to death in Smyrna in 155 AD.

(4) Justin Martyr - He was beheaded at Rome in 167 AD.  
His last words were:  
*"I am a Christian, having been freed by Christ, and by the grace of Christ, I partake of the same hope."*

(5) Blandina - A Christian slave girl. Tortured from morning until night declared:  
*"I am a Christian, and no evil is committed among us."*

(6) Perpetua and Felicitas - A noble lady in Carthage, Perpetua, and her slave Felicitas were killed by wild beasts in 203 AD.

## 6. Formation of the New Testament Canon.

- (1) The word canon means a rod, rule or measuring device.
- (2) Refers to the Biblical books that were judged to be of Divine origin (inspired - *God breathed*) and included as part of THE BIBLE.
- (3) No precise date can be given for the full recognition of the New Testament canon, but it can not be placed earlier than 300 AD.

## 7. False teaching arose during this period.

- (1) Gnostics - Taught that people could be saved by secret knowledge. (*Gnosis* - greek word for knowledge.)
- (2) Ebionites - Judiazers.

## 8. Condition of the church.

- (1) Purified through persecution.
- (2) Unified teaching.
- (3) A growing church.

The devil sought to destroy Christianity through persecution, but persecution only served to fan the flame of Christianity as the Gospel



spread throughout the known world.

### **III. THE IMPERIAL CHURCH - 313 AD. - 476 AD.**

From the Edict of Constantine - To the Fall of Rome.

1. Pergamos - “married” - The church was infiltrated by paganism, and became married to the world. - Rev. 2:12-17.

(1) Dwellest where satan’s seat is. - The Emperor’s throne in Rome.

(Having a. Imperial Church. - Autocratic rule. absolute power or authority).

b. The popes sat in satan’s seat of authority.

(2) Doctrine of Balaam.

a. Cast a stumbling block. - He gave council to entice Israel to sin. - Num. 31:16.

Roman b. Eat things sacrificed to idols. - The Catholic wafer.

c. Worldliness - The Church joined with the world.

(3) Doctrine of Nicolaitans.

a. “*Niko*” (*Gk.*) - To conquer or overthrow.

b. “*Laos*” - The people or laity.

c. Ruled over the laity.

d. Romanist clergy ruled harshly over the people.

2. Constantine.

Battled Maxentius for the throne. (312 AD.)

a. Battle of Milvan Bridge.

army of  
Constantine was outnumbered by the  
Maxentius who also wanted the throne.  
The winner of this battle would be the  
next Emperor of Rome.

b. The vision of the cross.

a cross,  
conquer.”  
of his  
Constantine claimed to have a vision of  
inscribed with the words: “ In this *sign*  
Constantine made *this cross* the symbol  
army, and had it placed on their shields.  
Archeological evidence shows us *this*  
*cross* was

- on top) the Egyptian ankh. (cross with a loop
- (a) Ankh - symbol for the sun god.
- conquer (b) Constantine would attempt to
- worship - Christianity with paganism. (baal
- the sun god.)
- c. Constantine won the battle, and became
- the Emperor of Rome.
- (2) Constantine made a profession of faith and
- conversion to Christianity.
- the a. Many Christian historians have doubted
- the sincerity of his profession.
- sun god b. Constantine continued to worship the
- would under the guise of Christianity. (What
- become Roman Catholicism.)
- (3) Edict of Toleration. 313 AD. (Edict of
- Constantine).
- Empire. a. Granted freedom to all religions in the
- Christianity. b. Ended the Roman persecution of
- had been c. Restored to Christians property that
- seized during Diocletian's reign.

d. Satan changed his tactics from persecution to infiltration.

(4) First historical pope.

( The official title of the pope).

a. Took the title of *pontifex maximus*.

b. Peter was not the first pope.  
(Paul's greeting to the Roman church does not mention Peter as being there in Rome. Rom. 16:1-15.)

3. Results of toleration to the Church.

(1) Persecution ended.

another persecution, acceptance.

a. Many were deceived, and accepted gospel of compromise.

b. Christianity, that flourished under persecution, became worldly under government acceptance.

(2) Churches seized during persecution were restored.

for elegant church buildings.

a. New churches were built.

b. The Roman *basilica* became the pattern for elegant church buildings.

divided  
end with  
Roman  
Basilica in

- (a) *Basilica* - Courtroom, a rectangle into isles by rows of pillars.
- (b) A semi-circular platform at one seats for the clergy.
- (c) This is still the pattern today in the Catholic church. (St. Peter's Rome).

- (3) Official sacrifices ceased.
- (4) Churches supported by the state.
- (5) Clergy received special privileges.
  - a. Became a wealthy class.
  - b. Became coveted positions.

requirement.

- (a) Salvation was no longer a
- (b) Evil men were ruling the church.
- c. Became men of great power.

4. Paganism melted with Christianity.

- (1) Pergamos - *married*.
- (2) Baal worship was sneaked into the Roman Church.

- established the
- would
- of
- been
- god.
- became the
- queen of  
the Old Testament.
- heaven"
- dispersion
- a. According to tradition Nimrod  
pagan cult of baal worship.
    - (a) Semiramis Nimrod's mother (who  
marry her son) became the "queen  
heaven".
    - (b) Nimrod was supposed to have  
reincarnated into baal, the sun  
god.
    - (c) Mother - infant idols (statues)  
representation of this pagan cult.
  - b. Baal the sun god, and Ashteroth "the  
heaven" were worshipped in  
- Judges 2:13, 10:16, I Sam. 7:14, 12:10.
    - (a) Cakes were made to the "queen of  
- Jer. 7:18, 44:17-19.
    - (b) Incense was also used in the cult.
  - c. The cult spread around the world.
    - (a) Taken with the people after the  
of Babel.
    - (b) From empire to empire.

Horus the

- (1) Egypt - Isis (queen) and sun god.
- (2) Babylon - Ishtar and Marduk.
- (3) Persia - Astarte
- (4) Greece - Aphrodite and Zeus.
- (5) Rome - Venus and Jupiter.
- (6) Ephesus - Diana

## 5. Fall of the Roman Empire. (Western)

- (1) Constantine chose a new Capital. - 330 AD.
  - a. Greek city of Byzantium.
  - b. Renamed Constantinople.
  - c. Increased the influence of the Roman bishop.
1. The capital was now far away.
  2. The Empire was already in collapse.
  3. After Constantine's death the Roman bishop became the Pope.
- (2) The division of the Empire soon followed the building of the new Capital.
  - a. One Emperor could no longer protect his vast

domain.

- b. The Adriatic Sea formed a natural barrier between the two divisions.
- c. In 395 AD. The Empire was split into the Eastern and Western Empire's. (The iron legs of Daniel 2)

(3) The Western Empire with Rome as it's Capital survived until 476 AD.

(4) The Eastern Empire with Constantinople as it's Capital survived until 1453.

a. Became the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages. (500 - 1500 AD.)

6. Christian leaders of the period.

(1) Athanasius (296-373 AD.)

- a. Defender of the faith in the Arian controversy.
- b. Became bishop of Alexandria. (325 AD)
- c. Exiled five times.

(2) John Chrysostom (345-407 AD.)

- a. Referred to as "the golden mouth," because of his eloquence.



able

b. A mighty preacher, a statesman, and an expositor of the Bible.

AD.

c. Became bishop of Constantinople in 398

truth, and died

d. He was banished, for his stand for  
in exile.

(3) Augustine (354-430 AD.)

a. Became bishop of Hippo in North Africa in 395 AD.

Pelagian

b. Chief defender of the faith in the  
Controversy.

teacher,

c. Developed a reputation as a preacher,  
and writer.

Roman

(4) Even though these men were a part of the  
Church, they stood for the faith.

popular

a. The exiles indicate they were not  
with the Roman leaders.

force out

b. The Roman Church would eventually  
anyone that opposed their pagan lies.

#### **IV. THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH - 476 - 1453.**

##### **From the fall of Rome - to the fall of Constantinople.**

- A. Thyatira - "continual sacrifice" - Rev. 2:18-21.
  - 1. Good works. - v. 19.
    - a. Not all were a part of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - 2. The spirit of Jezebel. - V. 20.
    - a. False doctrine. - v. 24.
    - b. Seductive spirit.
  - 3. Eat things sacrificed to idols. - v. 20.
    - a. The eucharist of Roman Catholicism.
    - b. The mass became a "continual sacrifice" for the living and the dead.
  - 4. The Middle Ages. - Notice Thyatira is midway in the

## Seven Churches.

### B. The Church of the Dark Ages.

"Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened," Is. 9:19.

1. The light of God's Word was taken from the people.
2. Civilization came to a halt.

### C. The Roman Catholic Church dominated Europe.

1. Immoral church leaders.
2. Idolatry - paganism.
3. Religious ceremony.

### D. Remnant groups of the period.

1. Albigenes.
  - a. Located in Albi, France. (1167)
  - b. Believed The New Testament, not the popes, provided the authority for their faith.
  - c. Opposed the Roman Church.
  - d. Fiercely persecuted by Pope Innocent III in 1208.
2. Waldensians.
  - a. Located in France, Italy, and Switzerland. (1176)

b. Named after their leader Peter Waldo.

1. Had the Bible translated into the people's language.

2. Taught Scripture is the authority of Christians.

c. Slogan: "The Word of God speaks, and we ought to obey it."

d. Greatly persecuted by the Roman Church.

#### E. The Inquisition.

1. A special court set up in the 1200's to deal with the heretics.

2. Many Christians were brutally killed and tortured.

#### F. Holy Wars. (The Crusades 1095-1291)

1. An attempt by the Roman Church to retake the Holy Land from the Muslims.

a. Used political rulers of Europe to lead the Crusades.

b. Muslims were gaining power in Europe.

2. The crusaders failed to free the Holy Land  
from the  
dominion of the Mohammedans.